

National Capital Region Inventory & Monitoring Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

19 September 2001

Center for Urban Ecology

I. Introductions and Welcome – John Howard, Chair.

II. I & M Program Overview and Goals, Ellen Gray, I&M Coordinator, NCR.

Ellen Gray presented the history, goals, and overview of the I&M program. NCR's budget was presented:

Biological Inventories	FY00-04	\$686k
Monitoring	FY01	\$150k
Monitoring	FY02+	\$630k
Water quality	FY01+	\$71k

A question was asked about the long-term implementation of the I&M program. Ellen Gray replied that if we're accountable we are expected to get continued support from congress.

III. Role of the Board of Directors.

Recommended approach for developing a monitoring plan:

- 1) Form a Board of Directors and Technical committee (Science Advisory Committee).
- 2) Summarize existing data and understanding.
- 3) Hold scoping workshop(s).
- 4) Write a workshop report and have it widely reviewed.
- 5) Decide on priorities and implementation approaches.
- 6) Draft the Monitoring Strategy.
- 7) Have the Monitoring Strategy reviewed and approved.

Servicewide vision for the Board of Directors (BOD):

- The board of directors is led by a superintendent.
- Members include superintendent from each park or their designee. This person must have authority to make on-the-spot decisions on personnel, funding, office space, and resource management issues.
- The I & M coordinator acts as staff to the Chair.
- The board makes decisions on budgeting, scheduling and hiring, based on recommendations from the Science Advisory Committee (SAC).
- The BOD promotes accountability for the program.
- The BOD operates under a Network Charter.

Ellen Gray asked the group whether this model will work for NCN and whether there are questions or comments about the role of the board.

Discussion--

Mel Poole asked whether the funding decisions that the superintendent or park designees must make are regarding I&M funds and/or park funding? After some discussion, it was decided that decisions need to be made for both I&M funds and park funds. Even if I&M funds are being used to monitor a vital sign, park funds are also involved (park housing, time of resource management and maintenance staff, etc.).

There will be formal minutes of BOD meetings that will be distributed to the representative from each park. The park representative, whether the superintendent or a designee, will be responsible for disseminating the minutes to interested parties at the park. John Howard sees the BOD activities involving decisions on park funding on some occasions. Mel Poole said that natural resource managers may not be able to respond “on the spot” with regards to many issues such as use of office space.

Ellen Gray suggested that the BOD discussion topics will be known prior to each meeting, so the park manager would be able to discuss decisions involving park resources with the superintendent before the BOD meetings.

Karen Cucurullo suggested streamlining the process of decision making and only involving the superintendents if other areas of operation are involved.

Most present seemed to agree that “on the spot” goes too far. Even superintendents may need to check with other operations before making final decisions.

John Howard said that the BOD will be acting on the basis of recommendations from the SAC, and anything that is discussed at BOD meetings will have been recommended by the SAC. Hopefully, the BOD will be briefed by the SAC and be able to check with people at their park before BOD meetings.

John Howard further stated that members of the BOD must have some authority in decision-making.

The question was posed whether there is a conflict with having the same park representative (i.e. natural resource manager) on both the BOD and the SAC. Ellen Gray did not believe there is a conflict, since the SAC is in an advisory role.

The question came up about who votes in decision making. Ellen Gray answered that the BOD votes and makes decisions, with one vote per park. The SAC consists of scientists, resource managers, and CUE staff.

Marcus Koenen explained that the SAC will identify stressors in the park, vital signs, design new monitoring protocols, get ready for the scoping sessions, and make recommendations to hire new staff. The BOD will vote on those proposals. Adrienne Coleman and Susan Trail raised the question of a conflict with this set up, since those who make the proposals will also vote.

Addressing this point, Ellen Gray explained that it is up to each park who should be on the BOD. Karen Cucurullo said that it makes sense to have the natural resource manager on the BOD, but he's also on the SAC. Is this not redundant?

Jim Sherald said that it makes sense to have the park resource managers on the SAC since they know the parks and the resources the best.

Karen Cucurullo asked who was on the Science Advisory or Technical Committee. Marcus Koenen replied that all resource managers in the parks as well as outside scientists will be present. The SAC will include CUE scientists and regional scientists as well as two ad hoc non-federal employees who will be participants rather than members of the committee. Dianne Ingram recommended calling them visiting scientists.

Mel Poole asked why not make one generic representative from the parks on the SAC and the managers from each park can join as issues pertaining to their parks come up. Marcus Koenen answered that it is helpful to have all the representatives from all the parks at each SAC meeting because issues common to all parks will come up at each meeting.

IV. Role of the Science Advisory Committee.

Marcus Koenen gave a presentation on the Science Advisory Committee.

Proposed Science Advisory Committee:

- The Science Advisory (Technical) Committee is comprised of natural resource managers, federal scientists from within and outside of NPS, plus the Network I & M Coordinator and Regional I & M Coordinator.
- It is chaired by the regional I & M Coordinator.
- The SAC is responsible for compiling existing information, preparing for scoping workshops, and writing the monitoring plan for the network.
- The SAC makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval.
- See attached handout for proposed Science Advisory Committee and bios for each member.

Marcus Koenen described the two ad hoc scientists: a landscape ecologist, Steve Seagle, from the Appalachian Environmental Laboratory and Doug Sampson from TNC. Ellen Gray said that depending on the topic of the SAC meetings, we'd invite additional scientists whose expertise in a particular subject area would be useful.

The SAC would help the I & M team prepare for the scoping sessions and produce a monitoring plan. Steps taken before the scoping sessions:

- The SAC would define goals and objectives for the monitoring program.
- It would draft lists of known stressors and other management issues.
- It would draft lists of important resources.
- The SAC would begin drafting conceptual models.
- It would also define criteria for indicator selection.
- Finally it would synthesize their suggestions into a report for the BOD.

The SAC will meet quarterly (4 meetings per year) to help get ready for the scoping sessions. The BOD will meet twice a year.

Futher discussion on the roles of the BOD and SAC--

Karen Cucurullo said that if the Board of Directors meets only twice a year it should be the superintendents who attend, although it would be important to know all the issues before coming to the meeting. An agenda for the BOD will be sent out ahead of time with specific items that need to be voted on. This way each superintendent can talk to their resource managers and Science Advisory Committee members about the details of the proposals needing attention at the BOD meeting.

Karen Cucurullo said that it would be up to the superintendent as to who is on the BOD. John Howard said that it should be the superintendent with the authority at every meeting, because issues might come up at every meeting which involve each park. He said that it is the level of approval you want that suggests final discussion on the make up of the board. Dianne Ingram said that you can't make the superintendents attend the BOD meetings. John Howard said that if the BOD is to be at the superintendent level, than anyone coming in the superintendent's place must have the authority given by the superintendent to make decisions about park management.

Adrienne Coleman said that the decision making person at the park should be on the BOD and resource managers should be on the SAC. Stan Lock suggested that if a park does not send someone to the meeting they will not get I & M money. Jim Sherald said that we're making decisions for the network. Each superintendent is not here to represent his or her park. We need to think about inventories and monitoring on a landscape level. Stan Lock suggested letting the resource managers run the BOD with only one superintendent present as the chair. This statement did not meet with general approval.

Bob Hickman said that the key is who can vote.

Stan Lock reiterated his previous position of removing the superintendents from the BOD. He said that they will never agree and will never be able to look at inventory and monitoring at a landscape level. He said that the superintendents are just here to get money for their parks.

John Howard said that each superintendent should take one day every six months to listen to the experts from the advisory committee to make science-based decisions about their park. He asked whether we wish to keep the board as it is now, a cross section of managers and superintendents. He said that Jim could get an executive order requiring superintendents to be on the board. Ellen Gray did not think such an action was called for. Adrienne Coleman agreed. She said that the BOD will have to stand as the superintendent or their designee. She stated that we have the interested folks here already.

Karen Cucurullo did not realize why she was on the list as a member of the BOD. Apparently this information was not passed on to her. John Howard asked if Stan Lock would like to be on the board. He said that he would. John Howard made a motion to include Stan Lock in the BOD. The motion was seconded.

Marcus Koenen moved that the BOD approve the Science Advisory Committee.

Stan Lock said that National Capital Parks Central, including the White House, should be included if we're to get 90%. Ellen Gray explained that the 90% refers to species found in parks with significant natural resources. National Capital Parks Central was not designated as an I & M park because it is not considered to have significant natural resources. Jim supported that statement.

John Howard said that the Board will now vote on the Science Advisory Committee. He asked the members to look at the draft committee and speak up if there is someone they would like to add or subtract (see attachment for list).

Adrienne Coleman asked whether a SAC of 35 is a workable committee. Ellen Gray said it should be, since there will be a core of participants which will consist of resource managers and I & M staff augmented with subject experts depending on what is being discussed at each meeting.

There is motion to accept the SAC by Chris Jones from WOTR. This motion is seconded by John Howard.

V. FY 2001 Activities

Ellen Gray gave a presentation on the status of biological inventories in the network, and how the five-year study plan was developed.

Adrienne Coleman asked how the I & M team came up with the researchers for each inventory. Ellen Gray answered that they sent out a request for proposals to local universities and research institutions.

VI. Evaluate the possibility of a network permit.

Ellen Gray brought up the topic of a network-wide permit for researchers.

She said that up to 11 permits are required from researchers per inventory project. Resource managers must go through same process at each park. Would it not be possible to streamline this process with a network permit? This process has been working well at the Northern Colorado Plateau Network.

Criteria for a network permit:

- Assign a network permit contact and administrative person. Could be John Sinclair, our Biological Inventories Coordinator.
- Determine network and park-specific conditions for research activities.
- Identify a superintendent to sign permits on behalf of all the parks in the network

- All superintendents would need to agree to the above terms in writing.
- Tim Goddard would assign a network code.

Dianne Ingram said that she would not want to release that decision making to one superintendent, because the parks run things differently. Mel Poole suggested that each park send in their requirements for permits. Karen Cucurullo said that eventually there could be a standard form. Dianne Ingram mentioned the section 106 requirements. Bob Hickman asked whether the researchers couldn't just see the resource manager before working in each park to get that park's requirements. John Howard agreed that researchers should not do work in a park without talking to the managers first. 106 requirements and T&E compliance issues will need to be addressed. The BOD needs more information on how other networks are doing it. Mel Poole suggested that network permits be issued only for non-destructive research. Work involving T&E species will need individual park permits. Ellen Gray said she will get more information about how the Northern Colorado Plateau Network has implemented their network permitting system.

VII. Vital Signs Monitoring Process.

Marcus Koenen presented the steps to developing a vital signs monitoring plan for the region.

Mel Poole asked whether just one scoping session was planned. Marcus Koenen replied that just one would be held, perhaps over a few days. After that there may be groups which form around various subjects.

Mel Poole then asked whether the scoping sessions would cover NEPA. Marcus Koenen said that that would come later on. He plans to invite other partner organizations and anyone doing monitoring in this region to the scoping sessions.

Time line for vital signs monitoring:

- There will be a BOD meeting in the spring.
- Four SAC meetings will be held next year.
- The scoping session will be held by December of 2002.
- The monitoring priorities will be set by December 2003.
- The scoping report will be completed by March of 2003.
- The draft monitoring plan will be in place by September 2004.
- The final monitoring plan should be in place by January 2005.

VIII. Annual Administrative Work Plan and Report, FY 2002

Ellen Gray said that the SAC will draft an annual administrative report and work plan which reports upon the previous year's activities and describes activities for the coming year. Every year the BOD will approve this plan. She also said that she had just received more guidelines from the servicewide program and will send the updated plan via e-mail. The BOD will be able to comment on the plan, and John Howard will sign the report for the board.

The BOD will meet twice a year, once in the spring, and once in the fall. The next BOD meeting will be in March or April. John Howard said that the Board will be free at this point to elect another chair if it so desires.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

NAME

Adrienne Coleman
Ray Chaput
Karen Cucurullo
Doug Curtis
Ellen Gray
Bob Hickman
John Howard
Dianne Ingram
Chris Jones
Marcus Koenen
Stan Lock
Mikaila Milton
Mel Poole
Dan Sealy (for Dottie Marshall)
Jim Sherald
John Sinclair
Stephan Syphax
Susan Trail
Christina Wright

PARK/OFFICE

Rock Creek
I&M NCR
MANA
CUE
I & M NCR
PRWI
ANTI
CHOH
WOTR
I & M NCR
White House Liaison
I & M CUE
CATO
GWMP
CUE
I & M NCR
NACE
MONO
I & M NCR